

THE
TRIBUNALL
OF THE
CONSCIENCE:
OR,
A TREATISE OF
EXAMINATION;

SHEWING
Why and how a Christian should
examine his Conscience, and take
an account of his life. (862)

The Second Edition, revised and enlarged. No. 3

By HENRY MASON, Parson of St. Andrews
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THE
TRIBUNAL
OF THE
CONSCIENCE

A SERIES OF
SERMONS

WILLIAM WATSON
Should a Christian should
be a member of the Church?

By the Rev. Wm. Watson

First Sermon, 1825.
100 pp. 1s.

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Printed by G. P. Colles Clarke, and more by John
at the Shop, under St. Paul's Church in
Cornhill, 1825.



TO
THE RIGHT
HONOURABLE, S^r
THOMAS COVENTRY, Knight,
Lord Keeper of the great Seale
of ENGLAND, and one of his
Majesties most Honourable Privie-
COUNSELL.

Right Honourable Lord,



Of long since I published a
small Treatise concerning
Fasting: and therein, the
matter giuing mee occasion
for it, I mentioned some
holy duties, fit (as I thought) to bee practi-
ced vpon a fasting-day; as namely *Exami-*
nation of our liues, *Confession* of our sinnes,
and a stedfast purpose of a better life. But
these

The Epistle Dedicatorie.

these being there but named onely, because the handling of them was not proper to that place, some haue desired a more full direction for the right performance of those holy duties. And because *Examination* of the Conscience is one of them, and such a one, as doth leade and direct and carry with it all the rest; I was vpon this occasion perswaded to reuise some Notes, which lay by mee, concerning that argument: and thence I haue framed this short Treatise, which I therefore call the *Tribunall of the Conscience*, because the worke intended is a kinde of judiciary proceeding, wherein a mans Conscience doth giue sentence vpon himselfe. And this little Treatise concerning the iudgement of the Conscience, I haue made bold to offer to your Lordships Patronage and Protection, who by your Office are *I V D G E* of the Court of Conscience: hoping that hauing your Name in the Front, it may finde the more fauour abroad; and nothing doubting, but that if it finde entertainement, it vwill returne some part of thankfulnessse to your
Lord-

The Epistle Dedicatorie.

Lordship back againe, by easing you and your Court of friuolous, tedious and vn-righteous quarels. For if Plaintifes would examine their conscience concerning the iustnesse of their cause, and the reasonable-nesse of their demands; it would make them to relinquish their cauilling suites before they did commence them. And if Defendants would examine their conscience concerning the wrongs they haue done, and the dues which they owe; it would make them to giue a willing satisfaction, rather than to weary their neighbour with vniust and shifting delaies. And if Lawyers would examine their conscience concerning such rules as Religion doth tye them to, in pleading for mens rights; it would make them to turne away such Clients, as brought them vnreasonable causes. And if Iudges would examine their conscience, concerning the duties of their place, and the condition of the suites that euery day are debated in the Court, it would make them so to entertaine all sorts of wranglers, as that they would haue no

A 3

great

The Epistle Dedicatorie.

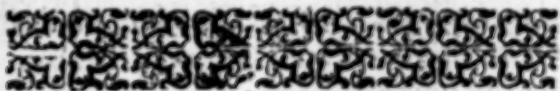
* *Mors Magi-*
stratum h. ne in-
venit, pe. debant
alibit quodam
causa ante annos
viginti capta.
Ille vero tam
dextre et feliciter
id munus gessit,
ut (quod nec an-
tea nec deinceps
unquam visum
est) semel Tribu-
nal de more con-
ferendum et causa
quodam expedi-
ta, sequentem
proferri iubens,
respondum acce-
perit, nullam illis
amplius causam
supereffe. Deo
igitur gratijs a-
ctis, quod negoti-
osissimum illud
Tribunal semel
vacaret, letus
sorterit: iubens
interea publicis
Cancell. registris
id inferri, in qu-
bis adhuc legi-
tur. Stapleton
de tribus Tho-
mas, in vita Th.
Mori. cap. 3.
pag. 997. B.

great lust to bring friuolous matters before a righteous Iudge. And so it might be hoped, that we might once againe see that, which is related to the honour of Sir * Thomas More (as a thing that was neuer seene either since or before;) that bee hauing ended a cause then before him, did call for the next to bee brought: but answere was returned him, that there was neuer another cause behinde. And so the Court was dismissed, because there were no more causes to be heard. And sure, if this be true, as they say it is recorded in the *publike Acts of the Court*, it was a great honour to the Iudge, and a great happinesse to the people of those times: but I am not without hope, but that the like honour to your selfe, and the like happinesse to this Land, may befall vs in your Lordships daies; whose noble iustice, and vnwearied industrie, haue by generall report, and with generall applause, rid so many causes out of Court alreadye. For the effecting of which blessing, my prayer to God shall be, that hee will confirme and prosper your Lordship in health and Honour, that you may

The Epistle Dedicatorie.

may continue, to the comfort of this Church and Common Wealth, in that happy and gracious course which you have honourably begun. And so I humbly take my leave, and shall ever remaine

Your Honours deuoted
in all seruice,
HENRY MASON.



A Catalogue of the Authors heere cited.

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Errata.

- P**ag. 18. lin. 24. & 25. advantage our suales, read advantage of our styles.
Pag. 37. lin. 23. therefore sure, read therefore.



THE
TRIVNALL
OF THE
CONSCIENCE:

OR,

A Treatise of *Examination*:

Shewing why and how a Christian should
examine his Conscience, and take an
account of his life.

IN the Historie of the Creation, it
is said, that at the daies end G o d
looked vpon the worke that hee
had made, and hee ^a *saw that it* ^{(a) Gen. 1. 4, 10.}
was good: and at the end of the ^{11, 18, 21, 25.}
weeke, taking a view of all his
workes together, ^b *hee saw every thing that hee had* ^{(b) Gen. 1. 31.}
made, and behold, it was very good. Which shew-
eth, that after God had done his workes, hee did
reflect vpon them, and considered the quality and
the condition of them. In imitation heereof, or
in conformity heereunto, wise men do wisly vs,
that at euery dayes end wee should reflect vpon

B.

our.

our workes, and take a view of what we have done that day; and at the weekes end, take account of all our doings for that space of time; and so further, as further occasion shall require. And this Enquitie or account-taking of our workes, they call the *Examination* of our soules or conscience. And surely, if we did obserue this *rule*, still to reflect vpon our selues after our workes are done, though we could not finde them to bee like vnto Gods workes, *good*, and *very good*; nay we should rather finde them *naught* and *very naught*: yet by this viewing and searching into our workes, if it bee rightly and diligently performed, wee may, without all doubt, make our workes much better then they are. In regard whereof, I haue assaied, whether by my poore labours this way, I may propound something to the Christian Reader, that may incite him to vndertake this worke willingly, or that may direct him how to performe it aright, and to the profit and spirituall good of his soule. And for this purpose, I haue thought these six points worthie of consideration:

1. *What generall Inducements there are, that may animate a Christian to vndertake the search and practice of this worke.*

2. *Wherein the performance of it doth consist, and what actions or performances it doth include and containe.*

3. *What the matter is, about which Examination is to be exercised.*

4. *In what Manner and order it may and ought to be performed.*

5. *What*

5. *What be the Times, in which it is most fit to be used.*

6. *What fruit or spirituall good a man may get by this Exercise, when it is rightly and carefully performed.*



CHAP. I.

What generall Inducements there are, that may animate a Christian to goe about and undertake this worke.



oman vndertaketh any worke, but in hope of some good to be gotten by it. For, [*Omnis actio est propter finem*] All actions, say Philosophers, are for some end: and [*finis & bonum conuertuntur,*] that which a man propoundeth to himselfe for his end, is the good which hee hopeth to gaine. This is generally true in all actions of any value, but most especially in such as be either difficult or distastfull to our nature: for men are hardly drawne to vndergoe such, but vpon good hopes that may recompence their labours, but without some reasonable inducements, no man would euer yeelde to take paines in difficult businesse. And vpon this consideration, being about an exercise that is somewhat laborious in it selfe, and very tedious to our vntoward nature; I haue thought it necessary in the very entrance, and as

it were by way of Preface, to consider what Inducements a reasonable man may haue to bestow his paines both in learning and in practicing of this dutie.

And for the Inducements, (beside the speciall vses and benefits that may be reaped by it, whereof I shall haue fitter occasion to speake hereafter, when the nature and conditions of it bee first laid downe and declared;) it will be sufficient, I suppose, for this place, to consider of some generall motiues: and they bee these two especially, first *Precept*, and secondly *Practice*. By *Precept* I meane such commands as God hath imposed vpon vs in Scripture, for the doing of this worke: and by *Practice* I meane the examples of wise men, who haue gone before vs in the vse of it, together with the exhortations and encouragements, by which they animate and prouoke themselves and others to the practice of it. By the one of which it is commanded as a necessary duty, and by the other it is commended as a profitable worke, that may stand vs in the wel-ordering of our life: and by both these, any reasonable man, but especially euery wise Christian may bee induced to vndergoe this taske, not doubting but that he is in a good way, in which so many wise and good men haue gone before him, and assuring himselfe of comfort and successe in that businesse, which God hath enioyned him. To come then to the Point.

I. The first Inducement to this worke, is Gods *Precept* or *Commandement*: such as that is,

Let

^a Let a man examine himselfe, and so let him eate of ^(a) 1 Cor. 11. this bread, and drinke of this cup. And that of the same Apostle; ^b Examine your selues, whether ye ^(b) 1 Cor. 13. 5. be in the faith; proue your owne selues. And that againe; ^c Let every man (saith hee) proue his owne ^(c) Gal. 6. 4. worke; or examine his owne worke: for the ^d same ^d *David* 20. word is vsed in this place and the former. And such also is that rule of *Dauid*; ^e Commune with ^(e) Psal. 4. 4. your owne heart upon your bed, and be still. Vpon which words Saint *Chrysostom* commenteth to this purpose; *What is this that he saith, [Commune with your owne heart, &c.]* Why? *Dauid* (saith he) speaketh to this effect; *After supper, when ye are going to sleepe,* — ^f set vp the iudgement seate of ^f *to discerner* the conscience, and of it require an account: and what ^g *discerner* euill counsell ye haue taken in the day time, either do- ^h *discerner* mising deceit, or circumuventing your neighbour, or en- ⁱ *discerner* tertaining of any corrupt lusts; those, when ye haue ^j *Chrysost. Exp.* produced and brought them forth, — and haue set ^k *in Psal. 4. pag.* your conscience as the Iudge to these wicked thoughts, ^l *26. C.* strike them thorow, and ^m *discerner* take reuenge vpon them.

II. The second Inducement, is the practice of good men, mingled with their exhortations and encouragements. In which kinde, and for which purpose,

I. We first reade in Scriptures, of *Dauid*, that he practised himselfe, what he preached to others. He that said vnto others, *Commune with your owne heart*; saith of himselfe, ⁿ *I call to remembrance* ⁽ⁿ⁾ Psal. 77. 6. *my song in the night*; *I commune with mine owne heart, and my spirit made diligent search.* And in another place, ^o *I thought on my waies,* (saith hee) ^(o) Psal. 119. 59.

and turned my feete vnto thy testimonies. In which words we may by the way note two things: First, the acts that *Dauid* did doe, and they were, hee *thought on* [or considered] *his waies*, and hee *turned his feete vnto G O D S Commandements*, *i.* hee did goe on in the way of Gods Commandements, doing what God did appoint him. Secondly, we may note the order that *Dauid* obserued in the doing of these acts, and that was, hee first *thought on his owne waies*, and then hee walked on in Gods Lawes: that is, first hee *examined*, and then hee *reformed* his life. And heerein he hath left vs a patterne for our practice, that if we meane to amend our liues, wee also must first begin with the examination of our waies. And the like both practice and patterne wee haue in the afflicted Church in the Lamentations of *Ieremie*. For there the Church, taught by the Prophet, thus encourageth each other; *a Let vs search* (say they) *and try our waies, and turne againe to the Lord*: implying, that examination is the ready way to conuersion and amendment.

2. We reade in the writings of the Ancients, that religious people haue beene accustomed to keepe a day-booke of their actions, and out of that to take an account of their life. *b Climacus* telleth, that in a religious house, whereinto he came, hee *found one, who had a little booke tyed at his girdle, in which he wrote all his thoughts; that keeping a memoriall of them, hee might* (besides his owne care) *shew them to his spirituall Father.* *c Nor was it this man alone that did vsa this course, but I found*

(a) Lam. 3. 40.

b Ad cuius locum quum ap-
pensum singulo
breuem libellum
conficere, di-
dici ex quotidianis
cogitationibus suis
in te notare,

*bisq. omnes nun-
ciare Pastori sub-
tuum. Climac.
Gradu. 4. extat.
tom. 6. part. 2.
Biblioth. Patr.
pag. 251.*

c Non solum au-
tem illam, sed &
alias quam plures
ad facere istudem
propexi. Clima-
cus.

found (saith he) very many others to doe the like. And in the proceſſe of the ſame diſcourſe, hee aduiſeth men who are carefull of their ſaluation, to obſerve the like order, telling vs, *a that bee is the beſt Banker or Tradeſman, that euery day in the euening taketh a perfect account of his gaines and of his loſſes. Which a man can no way know better, then if euery houre he note all things downe in his tables.* And to like purpoſe, *b S. Chryſoſtom, c S. Baſil, d S. Gregorie, e S. Bernard,* and others moe of thoſe ancient Worthies, do aduiſe and encourage religious Chriſtians of their time, to a daily examination of their conſciences, that in the morning they ſhould thinke how they haue paſſed the night, and in the euening, how they haue ſpent the day. And this daily care, and continuall accounting with their ſoules, was (as wee may well ſuppoſe) one chiefe reaſon, why thoſe times did ſo farre outgoe and exceede ours in zeale and deuotion. But certaine it is, that the practice of this exerciſe in thoſe daies, was very frequent and vſuall with all them that made any profeſſion of Religion; inſomuch as that *f S. Gregorie* ſaith, *That the Elekt do by no meanes ceaſe euery day heedfully to weigh, either what good things they haue receiued from GOD, or what euill things they haue returned him for his good, by their naughty liuing.* He addeth further, that

(f) Debet [uniuſuique] mens] cauere poſſe, vel quae ab eo [Domino] bona perceperit, vel quae male bonis illius peruerſe viuendo reſponderit. Quod electi quotidie ſuare non ceſſant. Et paulo poſt, Reprobos eſſe proprium ſolet, ſemper prauè agere, et nunquam quae egerint, retrahere. — At contra electorum eſt, illius ſui quotidie ab ipſi cogitationis ſonitu diſcurre, & omne quod turbidum proſpexit, ab intus explicare. Greg. Moral. lib. 25. cap. 6. pag. 266.

^a Faciebat hec
Sextius, et con-
firmato die
quam se ad voc-
ationem quietem
recessisset, inter-
rogat et animum
suum, Quod
hodie malum
tuum sanasti?
Cui vitio ob-
stitisti? Qua
parte melior
es? Senec. de
Ira l. 3. cap. 36.
pag. 398. Gy-
rald. de Histor.
Vocabulum, Vi-
alog. 4. pag.
356.
^b Quotidie apud
me causam dico.
Quam sublatum
a conspectu lumē
est, et contineat
vixit, morū iam
mei conscia, totū
diem me: cū ser-
uā, facta na dilla
mea remeſcit. Ni-
hil mihi ipse ob-
ſtando, nihil
traſeo. Quare
enim quicquam
ex erroribus meis
li nam, quā
ſeſſam dicere;
Vide ne ipſe
pūplino facies,
nunc ſibi igneſcit?
Senec. de Ira,
l. 3. c. 36. pag.
399.

it is vsually a propertie of reprobates alwayes to doe enill, and neuer to recount what they haue done:—and contrariwise, that it is the propertie of the Elect to diſcuſſe their deedes euery day from the very thought; which is the ſpring of all; and whatſoeuer they finde to be mirie or muddy, to dry that vp to the very bottome. And hereby we may ſee what the practice and opinion of the ancient Doctors of the Church, and other religious men of thoſe daies was concerning this duty of Examination. I proceed further to conſider what wiſe and vertuous men among the Heathen haue thought and ſaid of it.

Thirdly then, we may reade in good Authors among the Heathens, that their beſt and wiſeſt men were woont euery day to take an account of themſelues. *Sextius* the Roman Philoſopher ^a had this cuſtome, that at the end of the day, when hee be- tooke himſelfe to his nights reſt, hee wouid queſtion his ſoule, What maladic of thine haſt thou this day cured? What vice haſt thou ſtood out againſt? In what reſpect art thou better then thou waſt before? And *Seneca*, who reporteth this of *Sextius*, did practice the like himſelfe. ^b Euery day (ſaith hee) I pleade my cauſe with my ſelfe. When the candle is remoued from mine eyes, and my wiſe, who is priuie to my cuſtome, keepeth ſilence, I examine the whole day with my ſelfe, I goe ouer againe, and weigh my deedes and my words. I hide nothing from my ſelfe, I paſſe nothing ouer untouched. For what neede I to be afraid of my ſeates, ſeing I may ſay to my ſelfe; See thou doe it no more hereafter, for this time I forgine thee? The like was the practice of *Pythagoras* and his ſcholars,

^a what

* who had this rule given them from their Master, ^a *Fortis dicitur*
 that every day when they came home, they should de- ^{quis admodum}
 mand each man of himselfe, **WHEREIN HAVE** ^{solatus, ut ipse}
I TRANSGRESSED? WHAT GOOD ^{quodcumque quom-}
HAVE I DONE? AND WHAT DV- ^{dorum ingrede-}
TY HAVE I LEFT VNDONE? And ^{rentur, dicenti;}
Plutarch commendeth the same rule to them that ^{non magis;}
 would busie themselves in that which may auaille ^{non magis;}
 them. Nor was the custome of *Plato* much dif- ^{non magis;}
 ferent from this practice, ^{non magis;} *c* who as often as he was a- ^{non magis;}
 mong men that mis-behaved themselves, was accus- ^{non magis;}
 tomed in private to question with himselfe, **AND** ^{non magis;}
AM NOT I SUCH A ONE? or, Have not ^{non magis;}
 I done the like? And in a word, so generall and ^{non magis;}
 common is this practice among all men, to exa- ^{non magis;}
 mine or take accounts of their state in al busines- ^{non magis;}
 ses of moment, whether temporall or spiritual, as that ^{non magis;}
 our Sauour asketh of the multitudes about him; ^{non magis;}
Which of you intending to build a Towre, sitteth not
downe first and counteth the cost, whether he haue suf-
ficient to finish it, &c. or what King going to make
warre against another King, sitteth not downe first and
consulteth whether hee bee able with tenne thousand to
meete him that commeth against him with twenty
thousand? Or else, while the other is yet a great way
off, he sendeth an Ambassage, and desireth conditions
of peace. Hee meaneth, that there is no man of a-
 ny ordinary capacity and wit, but if he be to build,
 will first take account of his abilitie to perfect the
 worke: or if he be to make warre, will first take
 a view of his strength to goe thorow with the vi-
 ctory; that either he may prouide that which is

C

suffi-

sufficient for the successe, or else he may leaue off his intention. And then he applyeth this practice in matters of the world, to a like care in matters of a mans soule; So (saith he) *whosoeuer hee be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my Disciple.* The meaning is as if hee should say, So euery one of you that meaneth to be my Disciple, should first sit you downe, & cast with your selues, what it will cost you to bee a Christian; and that is the renouncing of all the world, and the forsaking of all that you haue in the world. And therefore you should resolue in the beginning, either to leaue all, if neede bee, for Christs sake, or else neuer vndertake to be Christians.

And these things laid together, that all wise men, whether Christian or Heathen, haue thought this course of *Examination* to be necessary, both in things of the world, and in things of God; yea, and that our blessed Sauour, and the holy Ghost speaking in the Scriptures, haue commended this practice vnto vs: these, I say, may bee strong inducements to make vs well-affected to the worke, before we know in particular what is required in the vndertaking of it, or what may bee expected by the performing of it.

CHAP. II.

Wherein the performance of this worke doth consist,
and what actions or performances it doth require.



Having hitherto prepared the Readers minde to haue a good opinion of this worke, I now go on to consider, wherein it doth consist. And for conceiuing hereof, we must consider, that *Examina-*

tion is a kinde of iudiciary proceeding, in which a man keepeth priuate Sessions at home, passing sentence of all his workes and actions, as Gods Law doth require. This the Apostle implyeth, when hauing first said, *a Let a man examine him-* (a) 1 Cor. 11.
selfe, and so let him eate, &c. he addeth by way of 22.
confirmation, to proue the necessitie or profitableness of this worke, *b For if we would iudge our* (b) vers. 31.
selues, we should not be iudged; that is, if we would (c) Exposit.
censure and passe sentence on our selues, by a in Plal. 4.
diligent performance of this worke of Examination, (d) *Nec deest in*
God would spare vs, or he would not censure *hoc iudicium men-*
vs the second time, after we had done it our selues *te conceptu, om-*
already. To this purpose S. Chrysostom calleth it *ne ministerium,*
an *erecting of a Tribunall for the conscience*; and S. *quod punire reat*
Gregorie, *that in this priuate iudgement there want* *sum plenius de-*
teeth no Officer that is vsuall for punishing of guiltie *beat. Nam Con-*
persons: for the Conscience (saith he) is the Accu- *sistentia accusat,*
ser, Reason is the Iudge, Feare is the Gaoler, and Sor- *Ratio iudicat,*
row *timor ligat, De-*
row *lur enturcat.*
row *Greg. Moral.*
row *L. 25. cap. 6.*

row is the Executioner. And therefore looke, what the proceeding is, and what actions are vsuall in publike Iudgements, where men are questioned and sentenced according to Law: and the like course is here to be held, and the same actions are to bee performed in the examination of a mans soule & conscience. For as in those legall proceedings, there is first an enquire into the facts, what hath beene done, which by the Law deserueth censure. Secondly, there is sentence pronounced, according to the nature of the crimes, and the proofes made of them. Thirdly, there is punishment inflicted, either for the amendment of the offender, or for example and terror to others, that they offend not in like sort. Or, if the partie accused be cleared by the Iurie, hee is acquitted and set free by the Iudge. So in this Court of priuate Sessions, First, there is an enquire or search, to finde out the transgressions or offences of the soule. Secondly, there is sentence to bee pronounced, according as the nature of the facts doth require. Thirdly, if the sentence bee condemnatorie, punishment is to be inflicted by the offenders conscience vpon himselfe; that by taking a holy reuenge vpon his owne folly, he may bee made more carefull of offending afterward. Or if a man shall be so happy, as after enquire to finde nothing by himselfe, he may cheere his soule with an [*Euge serue bone,*] * *Well done thou good and faithfull seruant.* And heereby the sincere Christian may be encouraged in Gods seruice, and animated to proceede in those holy courses,

in.

(a) Mat. 25. 23.

in which he hath found so much comfort already. And because there is no man that doth faithfully performe this service of examining his soule, but hee shall bee sure to finde something wherein hee hath sinned, and something wherein hee hath served God aright; therefore hee shall neuer want matter, either to condemne, or in some part to absolue himselfe, more or lesse, according as his life hath beene in times past, and according as he hath made vse of this and such other exercises of Religion. And consequently in every Examination, if it be thoroughly performed, a man will lightly gaine two helps toward Heauen. First, by condemning of himselfe, hee will conceiue feare of relapsing into sinne: and secondly, by acquitting himselfe, he will gaine more comfort to proceede in well-doing.

By this it may appeare in part, what the nature of this worke is, and wherein it doth consist: but for the more distinct knowledge of this point, it may further be noted, that there bee two sorts of acts which are implied in this word Examination, and in some sort included in it: some are *essentiall*, and contained in the nature of it; and some are *accidentall*, and to be conioyned with it, and indeed are presupposed to accompany it, when it is rightly vnderaken.

Of the former sort are these three, 1 Discussion, 2 Application, and 3 Censure.

Discussion is a sifting of our life and dealings, by which we pull things out of the heape where before they lay confused and vnseene, and by
C 3: which

which we set every fact of ours in the open view, that they may bee scanned and seene by themselves what they are.

Application is a laying of these acts thus searched and found out, to the rule of Gods Law, which is the touchstone of all our doings, and according to which God will iudge vs at the last day: that so it may appeare how and wherein we haue swarued from Gods Law, or haue obserued it.

Lastly, *Censure* is the iudgement, that our mindes and consciences doe giue vpon our deeds according to the rule of the Law; both for the quality of them, whether they bee righteous or sinfull; and for the quantitie of the offence, whether it be great or small, whether a sinne of ignorance, or a sinne against conscience; and whether of humane frailty, or of obdurate contumacie.

The first act serueth to shew what wee haue done: the second, what we should haue done: and the third, what the doome is that wee haue deserued either by well or ill doing. And these three laid together, doe (as I take it) make vp the nature of this worke of Examination; so that we may not vnsitly describe it out of its owne principles, in some such manner as this; Examination is a *discussion of a mans life, that his workes may be seene and censured according to the rule of GODS Law.*

Secondly, for the second sort of acts, which are implied in this word, and ought to be ioyned with this worke, they are two especially, the one going

going before the proper acts of Examination, and that is a purpose to better a mans spirituall estate, by correcting what is amisse, and confirming what is sound and vpright. And the other is an act that followeth after Examination, and that is an effectuall practiſe or execution of ſuch rules and orders as may backe our examination, and make it more effectuall & vſefull For which purpose, theſe rules following may perhaps bee not impertinent nor vnſit: every wiſe Chriſtian may, as his experience ſhall give him further occaſion, adde, and vſe more of his owne or other mens obſervation.

1. Rule. That after wee have examined our ſoule, we do then compare our preſent with our precedent ſtate, and conſider whether we haue amended indeed, what we blamed our ſelues for in our former examinations; and how we haue either increaſed or decreaſed in grace and goodneſſe: that if we haue beene ſlothfull and vnprofitable ſeruants, we may ſnubbe and ſhame our ſelues for it before God and our owne conſciences, in ſome ſuch manner as our Lord ſnubbed the euill ſeruant in the Goſpell, *Thou wicked and ſlothfull ſeruant, &c.*: and if wee haue beene diligent, and in ſome meaſure haue increaſed our Lords talents, that then wee may cheere our ſoules out of the comfort of our wel-doing, and praiſe our God, that hath both giuen vs talents to trade with, and grace to vſe them to his glory. For this practice will whett our diligence for time to come.

1. Rule.

*inſent ſoules
apocryph
exhortatō
apocryph
apocryph
apocryph
apocryph
Basil. de Abdi-
catione rerum
in fine. p. 246.
(e) Mat. 25. 26.*

2. That every morning before wee begin our worke,

1. Rule.

worke,

worke, we consider what we are going about, what occasions of doing good either to our selves or others, we may meete with, and what tentations may assault vs in the businesse of that day; that so we may lay hold vpon all occasions of doing good, and prepare our selves to stand out with courage against all oppositions and tentations, that may hinder vs in our duties, or draw vs into sinne. For by this meanes, occasions of doing well shall not ouerslip vs vn-espied, nor will tentations surprize vs at vnawares.

3. Rule.

3. That if we haue profited in grace, and haue taken occasions of doing good, we consider at fit times, by what meanes wee haue profited and haue beene enabled to doe well; that so wee may make more constant vse of such meanes, by which wee haue found so much sensible good already. And if wee haue decayed, or forslowd our opportunities, or haue runne into any sinne, then we should obserue, what it was that did misleade vs, and by what tentations we were overcome, that our former errours may make vs more warie, and more resolute against cases of danger, for the time to come. For by this meanes we shall euery day gaine some experience, how to behaue our selves in the daily conflicts of our Christian warfare.

4. Rule.

4. That we recall home our thoughts, as wee meete with any occasions of moment, or light vpon any such businesse, as concerning which we haue formerly conceiued a purpose of warie and religious behaviour: that while we are in doing
of

of the worke, we may remember to make vse of our former resolution, and now practice what before we did purpose. For by this meanes we shall be sure that our good purposes shall not bee idle and without fruite; as in many men it falleth out, who are like sluggish people, that ouer-night appoint to rise carely, but when the morning cometh, cannot abide to leave their warme beds.

These Rules I have thought on, as beeing in mine opinion fit to backe our examination, and to make it more powerfull for an holy life: Others, as I said before, may in their daily obseruation adde more, and perhaps finde out some better then these. And as in the ordering of our bodily health, Physicians aduise their Patients to follow that whereof they finde good, and to auoyd that which doth not agree with their temper: so it is good counsell in the ordering of our soules, to make daily vse of that which by experience wee finde either to strengthen grace, or to weaken sinne in vs: and contrariwise to flee from all such occasions and vsages, as wee see or haue found to hurt or endanger vs. I onely adde thus much more; That these later sort of acts, whereof now I haue beene speaking, though in themselves simply considered they bee but *Ad-iuncts* and *Attendants* on Examination, without which it may subsist in its bare nature; and therefore are not necessary *ad esse*, as the Schooles doe speake: yet in the vse of the word, and in the intendment of the Scripture they are implied, included, and presupposed to goe with it and at-

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tend

tend it, as being necessarie *ad bene esse*, to the well doing of this worke: as may appeare by these reasons.

1. Reason.

1 Ioh. 3. 4.

1. It is the vse and custome of Scripture, vnder words of knowledge belonging to the vnderstanding, to comprehend affections and practice. As when S. *Iohn* saith, *Hee that saith, I knowe God, and keepeth not his Commandements, is a lyer, and the truth is not in him*: hee meaneth not by the word [*knew*] a bare and simple knowing and apprehending, which the learned call [*cognitio apprehensiuæ*], but he meaneth an effectuall and working knowledge, which breedeth or bringeth forth such affections in the heart, and such actions in the life, as that knowledge directeth men to: which knowledge they call [*cognitio affectiua*]. And so in this case, Examination is properly a worke of the vnderstanding, singling things out of the confused heape, that they may appeare what they are: but by way of consequent it doth imply such affections and actions, as this worke of the vnderstanding is intended for, which is the bettering and amending of our spirituall estates, and the ordering of euery thing for the best advantage of our soules and saluations.

2 Reason.

1 Cor. 11. 28.

2. Secondly, that thus much is implied and intended by this word, may hereby appeare, that the Apostle speaking of the danger of vnworthy receiuing of the Lords Supper, and prescribing meanes to correct all abuse that way, saith; *Let a man examine himselfe, and so let him eate of this Bready and drinke of this Cup*. For if by the word
[examine]

[*examine*] he meant nothing but *discussing* and *sifting* without correcting and amending; hee should allow men to goe to the Communion with the conscience of sinne, and without reformation of life. And which is yet worse, should approve of a man as a worthy guest at the Lords Table, onely because he hath learned to know his estate, though he no way meane to amend it; whereas this knowledge of a mans selfe would increase his sinne, and make him the lesse welcome vnto God, according to that rule of our Saniour, *That* Luk. 12. 47.
seruant which knew his Lords will, and prepared not himselfe, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. And therefore when the Apostle saith, *Let a man examine, and so let him eat;* hee meaneth, that after hee hath examined, hee should amend whatsoeuer is amisse, and performe whatsoeuer vpon examination hee shall finde necessarie or fit to be done. And hence it followeth, that a purpose to amend our life, and to doe what vpon our examining shall appeare good for our soules, is a necessary duty, as an antecedent act that should goe before Examination; and that a practice of such things, as by tryall shall appeare viefull for this purpose, is another necessary dutie, as a consequent act that should follow after it. And so in conclusion it appeareth, that there are three especiall acts required for the right performance of this worke: 1, a constant resolution to amend and better the estate of the soule; 2, a di-

ligent search, thereby to gaine the right knowledge of it: and 3, an effectuall performance of all such things, as are auailable for this purpose. And out of all these laied together, we may make a more full description to this purpose; Examination is a *Discussion of a mans life, for finding out the true estate of a mans soule toward GOD; accompanied with a purpose and endeuour to doe whatsoever vpon tryall shall appeare requisite for saluation and the good of a mans soule.*



CHAP. III.

Of the Object of this worke, or the matter about which it is to be exercised.

Hitherto we haue spoken of the acts, now we are to consider of the Object, or matter about which they are to bee bestowed and imployed. And it may bee considered two wayes; either generally, and such as it is in the largest extent, which wee may call the *adequate* object; or specially, and such as is in more principall manner to bee respected and looked to, which may bee called the *Principall* or *Speciall* object.

I. And first for the *adequate* Object, including every thing that ought to be examined, or about which a Christian should examine himselfe; it is whatsoever either thought, word or deede, which carrieth

carrieth any respect either of righteousness or sinfulness in it, or all both our good and our euill acts. For Examination beeing (as before was noted) a kinde of iudiciary proceeding with our owne soules, in which wee keepe Sessions at home, that we may prepare for the great Iudgement: it hath for its object the same matter, that shall be discuffed and sentenced at the day of the last Iudgement. And that is, (as *Solomon* telleth vs) *every worke whether good or euill. For a G O D* (a) *Eccles. 12.*
(saith hee) shall bring every work into iudgement, 14.
with every secret thing, whether it be good or euill: that is, every thing that is morally euill or morally good, or which is either sinfull or righteous. And therefore in imitation of Gods proceeding in his Iudgement, we also should proceed in our iudging of our selues; which is to consider of euery thing, which is either good or euill, sinfull or righteous, a breach of Gods Law, or a performance of it.

But for our more distinct vnderstanding; and our better direction heerein, it will not be amisse to consider our good and our euill workes each apart by themselves.

And first for our euill deedes or our sinnes, we may note these rules following.

1. We must consider and examine our selues, as well concerning our omission of duties, as commissions. For in the last Iudgement, our Lord the Iudge of quicke and dead, he will not onely giue sentence against murders and oppressions and robberies, and such like, but (b) *Mat. 23. 41,*
 42, 43.
 D 3. gainst

gainst vnmercifulnesse also, and the not feeding of the hungry, the not lodging of the stranger, the not clothing of the naked, the not visiting of the sick, &c. And so when we are to iudge our selues, we must censure not onely our hurting of our neighbour, but our not helping of him; nor onely our backbiting of our neighbour, but our not defending of his good name; nor onely our persecuting of Gods Word, but our not profiting by it; nor onely our robbing of the poore, but our not relieuing of them: and so in all other the like cases, our *not doing* of that which is good, when dutie doth require it of vs, is culpable before God, and is part of that matter about which our Examination ought to be exercised.

2. We must consider not onely the substance of our sinnes, but the circumstances of them also; such as are the persons, the time, the place, the faction or manner of doing, &c. for all these may either aggravate or mitigate the sinne. So we see that the treason of *Judas* is counted the more grieuous, because he was one of Christs familiar friends, which did eate of his breade: and *Manasses* his idolatry was the more hainous, because hee *set his idoll in the House of God, of which GOD had said to David, and to Solomon his Sonne, In this House and in Ierusalem which I haue chosen before all the tribes of Israel, will I put my name for ever.* And so, the cruell dealing of the Iewes was the more hainous, because *in the day of their fast, they did exact all their labours, and did smite with the fist of wickednesse.* And *Solomons* idolatry did anger and offend

Psal. 41. 9. &
Iohn 13. 18.

(4) 2 Chron.
33. 7.

(5) Isa. 58. 3, 4.

offend God the more, because ^(a) *his heart was turned* ^{1 King. 11.} *from the Lord, which had appeared vnto him twise,* ^{9, 10.} *and had commanded him concerning this thing, that he should not goe after other Gods.* And so our finnes will be the more grieuous, if we wrong them who haue helped vs, or if in the Church of God, and in the time of his seruice, our hearts do meditate reuenge, or forecast vniust deuices, or take pleasure to think on our fleshly lusts, &c. And therefore these circumstances are to come into the account together with the maine finnes.

3. Thirdly, not onely the sinne, but the occasion of it is to be considered: for this may either increase or diminish the guiltinesse of it. As the rich man that had many sheepe of his owne, and yet tooke away *the poore mans lamb*, to make his friend welcome with, was the more grieuous offender by much, because hauing no neede, hee did rob the poore man. And againe, the consideration of the occasion or prouocation by which wee were led into sinne, may teach vs wisdom, by shunning such occasions to escape from the finnes.

4. Fourthly, we are to reckon among our finnes, that must be accounted for, not onely our commissions of euill deedes, and omissions of good duties, but even our vnperfect and defective performances. For of these the Church of God doth accuse themselves; ^b *All our righteousnesses*. ^(b) *Isa. 64. 6.* *as are as filthy raggs:* and in respect of these it was, that the High Priest was by the Law ^c to ^(c) *Exod. 28. 38.* *carry the iniquity of the holy things, which the children*

doen.

dren of Israel should hallow, in all their holy gifts. For that doth imply, that the seruices of Gods people had their imperfections and errorrs, which because they were failings in duties, were to bee borne by *Iesus* our *High-Priest*, as our other sinnes were. And therefore we must reckon with our selues not onely for omitting or neglecting the exercises of Religion, but for our *distractions*, our *wandering thoughts*, and our *cold and dull affections*, while we did performe them.

Thus our euill deeds or sinnes may be considered: our good workes and holy duties may not be neglected neither, and that for these reasons.

1. Because we are many times deceived with shewes; thinking that to be good which is euill, and that to be some great good, which is but a poore seruice in comparison. Thus ^a *Paul* thought he shewed much *zeale*, when he *persecuted the Church of Christ*: and ^b *Micah* thought hee had highly demerited Gods fauour, when hee kept a Priest for Idolatrous seruice: and *Iehu* boasted of his killing of *Ahabs* children; ^c *Come with me*, (saith he) *and see my zeale for the Lord*: when as God censured it for vniust sheading of blood; ^d *Yet a little while* (saith God) *and I will avenge the blood of Iezreel upon the house of Iehu*. And so wee are too apt to ouerweene our selues and our owne workes; and think that we are zealous for God, when we are enuious against men; or ambitious for our selues. And for discerning of this corruption, examination is necessary to be vsed about those workes which wee esteeme to bee righteous

(^a) Phil. 3. 6.

(^b) Iudg. 17. 13.

(^c) 1 King. 10. 16.

(^d) Hof. 1. 4.

righteous and holy, lest we deceiue our selues by ouer-partiall iudgement.

2. Because in the very workes which are truly good, wee do many times intermingle corruptions of our owne. For sometimes there are ill ends in our good deedes, as ^a *Iezabel* proclaimed ^(a) King. 21. a fast to cloake her murder withall, and ^b the *Pha* ^(b) Mat. 6. 2, 5, *rises* fasted and prayed and gaue almes, for gaining of vaine praises. And sometimes our good duties are performed in an euill manner; as ^c the *Midwives* saued the childrens liues, by telling of a lye; and ^d *Ziporah* circumcised her sonne, in a pettish humour; and ^e *Vzzah* stayed the Arke ^(d) Exod. 4. 25. from falling, without sufficient warrant for such a worke. But most times there are distractions, and worldly or perhaps wicked thoughts in the midst of our best deuotions: and alwayes there are defects and imperfections and failings, when we are most seruent and best affected. And for discerning of these, our best workes deserue a strict account, that we may learne to separate the *precious from the vile*: and neither be too highly conceited of our weake performances, nor too little affected with our corruptions and infirmities.

3. Our good workes are to be considered in our Examinations, that by those things which are able to abide the touchstone, we may gaine courage against oppositions of men, and comfort against the tentations of Satan, and a settled resolution to proceede and goe on in a daily practice of good workes; alwayes praising God for these

^(c) Exod. 1. 17, 19.

^(d) Exod. 4. 25.

^(e) Chron. 13.

3. compared

with cap. 15.

12, 13.

these mercies ; because it is hee that *worketh in vs both the will and the deed*. And in these respects, the consideration of our good workes is not without good vse. And this may suffice for the *adequate* obiect, or the matter of Examination in generall and in the largenesse of it.

II. Secondly, for the *principall* Obiect, or the speciall matter which is to come into Examination, it is euery such sinne as is likely to breed vs some speciall danger. For if a Citie be besieged, wise *Gouernours* will take care of euery posterne doore, and of euery part of the Walls, to reparaire what is decayed, and to keepe all safe from the Enemie : but if one Gate be more likely to bee entred than other, or if any part of the Wall bee weaker or more easily to be broken downe, men will there set the watch the surest, where the danger is the greatest. And if a man be distempered with sundry diseases, a wise *Physitian* will take care of all, to ease the Patient, as much as may be, of euery one of them : but if some speciall disease be more dangerous to the sicke man, than others are ; the Physician will bend his cure that way especially, where the life of his Patient is most endangered. And so it is, or should be with vs in respect of our soules : Wee haue heere a *Fort* to keepe, which is euery day assaulted by our Enemies ; and we haue a *diseased soule* of our owne, distempered with many spirituall maladies : but some maladies are worse then other, and some parts of this Fort are weaker or more in danger then others are : I meane, there are some sinnes, by

by which the Deuill may more easily surprize and captiuate our soules. And therefore, as wee should keepe diligent watch against them all; so wee should especially bend our forces against those that do or may more especially breede vs harme, and hinder our saluation. And consequently, Examination being an approued meanes for grubbing vp of sinne, wee should apply this exercise against all sinnes in generall; but more especially against those, from which we may in reason feare the greatest danger. And these are either such sinnes as are *easily contracted*, or such as are *hardly recovered*. For into the one sort men fall often, and out of the other they doe seldomer recover, if they once fall into them: and so the one sort will endanger vs by the *frequencie* of our falls, and the other by the *difficultie* of our rising, after we bee downe. But for better and more distinct vnderstanding of this point, wee may in a more particuler manner consider the severall sorts of sinne, which in either of these two respects may breede some especiall danger. And of this kinde I take these sinnes following to bee.

1. Those that be great and *reigning* sins: such as the Apostle saith do exclude a man out of Gods Kingdome, And in this kinde he reckoneth, ^(a) *for-* *nication, idolatrie, adultery, effeminatenesse, sodomie, theft, couetousnesse, drunkennesse, reuilings, extortion.* Of which sinnes, and such like, he saith, that they that are guilty of them, *shall not inherit the Kingdome of God.* And he meaneth, that while they are such, or till by repentance and forsaking of

(a) 1 Cor. 6. 9.
Gal. 5. 19,
20, 21.

them, they have obtained pardon, they shall never come into Gods Kingdome. Against these *Dauid* prayeth: ^a *Keep back thy servant from presumptuous sins, let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall bee innocent from the great transgression.* And against these wee should watch and pray, that we may avoyd them; or if we have fallen into them, we should by Examination learne to conceive the danger, that by repentance we may gaine pardon. For whereas lesser sinnes, such as *Dauid* calleth ^b *errors and secret faults*, i. sinnes, which in regard of their finelnesse and our frailty, doe escape vs through ignorance, vnwarinesse, or common and humane infirmities; whereas, I say, these sins are in the best of Gods children; (for even they say, ^c *If we say that we have no sinne; we deceive our selves, and the truth is within us:*) one of these other grosse sinnes being such as cannot ordinarily be committed, but with conscience and purpose of sinne in the offender, doth bereave men for the present of grace, and all title and interest to the Kingdome of Heaven. For so our learned Divines, though they denie falling from grace, yet affirme of such like sinnes, that ^d *they are not pardoned, till they be repented of*; that ^e *they make men guiltie of eternall damnation*; & ^f *that if a man should continue in them to the end of his life, he should misse of eternall life*; that ^g *by them men who are regenerated do incurre a*

(a) Psal. 19. 13.

(b) Psal. 19. 12.

(c) 1 Ioh. 1. 8.

^d *assquam de-**creta est remissio**peccatorum a se-**parit. nra, nra,**unquam alia con-**ditiore concessa**est. D. Abbot**in Tomson.**cap. 24. pag.**212. Vide e-**tiam cap. 12.**23, 27, &c.*^e *locutus [pec-**catum] regnum,**quia in perium**tenet in bonis,**et cum eterna**damnatione reli-**quenda. Vrin.**Catech. part. 1.**q. 7. pag. 62.*^f *in prosequit**volens par. 1. 2. 3.**2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8.**10. 11. 12. 13. 14.**15. 16. 17. 18. 19.**20. 21. 22. 23. 24.**25. 26. 27. 28. 29.**30. 31. 32. 33. 34.**35. 36. 37. 38. 39.**40. 41. 42. 43. 44.**45. 46. 47. 48. 49.**50. 51. 52. 53. 54.**55. 56. 57. 58. 59.**60. 61. 62. 63. 64.**65. 66. 67. 68. 69.**70. 71. 72. 73. 74.**75. 76. 77. 78. 79.**80. 81. 82. 83. 84.**85. 86. 87. 88. 89.**90. 91. 92. 93. 94.**95. 96. 97. 98. 99.**100. 101. 102. 103. 104.**105. 106. 107. 108. 109.**110. 111. 112. 113. 114.**115. 116. 117. 118. 119.**120. 121. 122. 123. 124.**125. 126. 127. 128. 129.**130. 131. 132. 133. 134.**135. 136. 137. 138. 139.**140. 141. 142. 143. 144.**145. 146. 147. 148. 149.**150. 151. 152. 153. 154.**155. 156. 157. 158. 159.**160. 161. 162. 163. 164.**165. 166. 167. 168. 169.**170. 171. 172. 173. 174.**175. 176. 177. 178. 179.**180. 181. 182. 183. 184.**185. 186. 187. 188. 189.**190. 191. 192. 193. 194.**195. 196. 197. 198. 199.**200. 201. 202. 203. 204.**205. 206. 207. 208. 209.**210. 211. 212. 213. 214.**215. 216. 217. 218. 219.**220. 221. 222. 223. 224.**225. 226. 227. 228. 229.**230. 231. 232. 233. 234.**235. 236. 237. 238. 239.**240. 241. 242. 243. 244.**245. 246. 247. 248. 249.**250. 251. 252. 253. 254.**255. 256. 257. 258. 259.**260. 261. 262. 263. 264.**265. 266. 267. 268. 269.**270. 271. 272. 273. 274.**275. 276. 277. 278. 279.**280. 281. 282. 283. 284.**285. 286. 287. 288. 289.**290. 291. 292. 293. 294.**295. 296. 297. 298. 299.**300. 301. 302. 303. 304.**305. 306. 307. 308. 309.**310. 311. 312. 313. 314.**315. 316. 317. 318. 319.**320. 321. 322. 323. 324.**325. 326. 327. 328. 329.**330. 331. 332. 333. 334.**335. 336. 337. 338. 339.**340. 341. 342. 343. 344.**345. 346. 347. 348. 349.**350. 351. 352. 353. 354.**355. 356. 357. 358. 359.**360. 361. 362. 363. 364.**365. 366. 367. 368. 369.**370. 371. 372. 373. 374.**375. 376. 377. 378. 379.**380. 381. 382. 383. 384.**385. 386. 387. 388. 389.**390. 391. 392. 393. 394.**395. 396. 397. 398. 399.**400. 401. 402. 403. 404.**405. 406. 407. 408. 409.**410. 411. 412. 413. 414.**415. 416. 417. 418. 419.**420. 421. 422. 423. 424.**425. 426. 427. 428. 429.**430. 431. 432. 433. 434.**435. 436. 437. 438. 439.**440. 441. 442. 443. 444.**445. 446. 447. 448. 449.**450. 451. 452. 453. 454.**455. 456. 457. 458. 459.**460. 461. 462. 463. 464.**465. 466. 467. 468. 469.**470. 471. 472. 473. 474.**475. 476. 477. 478. 479.**480. 481. 482. 483. 484.**485. 486. 487. 488. 489.**490. 491. 492. 493. 494.**495. 496. 497. 498. 499.**500. 501. 502. 503. 504.**505. 506. 507. 508. 509.**510. 511. 512. 513. 514.**515. 516. 517. 518. 519.**520. 521. 522. 523. 524.**525. 526. 527. 528. 529.**530. 531. 532. 533. 534.**535. 536. 537. 538. 539.**540. 541. 542. 543. 544.**545. 546. 547. 548. 549.**550. 551. 552. 553. 554.**555. 556. 557. 558. 559.**560. 561. 562. 563. 564.**565. 566. 567. 568. 569.**570. 571. 572. 573. 574.**575. 576. 577. 578. 579.**580. 581. 582. 583. 584.**585. 586. 587. 588. 589.**590. 591. 592. 593. 594.**595. 596. 597. 598. 599.**600. 601. 602. 603. 604.**605. 606. 607. 608. 609.**610. 611. 612. 613. 614.**615. 616. 617. 618. 619.**620. 621. 622. 623. 624.**625. 626. 627. 628. 629.**630. 631. 632. 633. 634.**635. 636. 637. 638. 639.**640. 641. 642. 643. 644.**645. 646. 647. 648. 649.**650. 651. 652. 653. 654.**655. 656. 657. 658. 659.**660. 661. 662. 663. 664.**665. 666. 667. 668. 669.**670. 671. 672. 673. 674.**675. 676. 677. 678. 679.**680. 681. 682. 683. 684.**685. 686. 687. 688. 689.**690. 691. 692. 693. 694.**695. 696. 697. 698. 699.**700. 701. 702. 703. 704.**705. 706. 707. 708. 709.**710. 711. 712. 713. 714.**715. 716. 717. 718. 719.**720. 721. 722. 723. 724.**725. 726. 727. 728. 729.**730. 731. 732. 733. 734.**735. 736. 737. 738. 739.**740. 741. 742. 743. 744.**745. 746. 747. 748. 749.**750. 751. 752. 753. 754.**755. 756. 757. 758. 759.**760. 761. 762. 763. 764.**765. 766. 767. 768. 769.**770. 771. 772. 773. 774.**775. 776. 777. 778. 779.**780. 781. 782. 783. 784.**785. 786. 787. 788. 789.**790. 791. 792. 793. 794.**795. 796. 797. 798. 799.**800. 801. 802. 803. 804.**805. 806. 807. 808. 809.**810. 811. 812. 813. 814.**815. 816. 817. 818. 819.**820. 821. 822. 823. 824.**825. 826. 827. 828. 829.**830. 831. 832. 833. 834.**835. 836. 837. 838. 839.**840. 841. 842. 843. 844.**845. 846. 847. 848. 849.**850. 851. 852. 853. 854.**855. 856. 857. 858. 859.**860. 861. 862. 863. 864.**865. 866. 867. 868. 869.**870. 871. 872. 873. 874.**875. 876. 877. 878. 879.**880. 881. 882. 883. 884.**885. 886. 887. 888. 889.**890. 891. 892. 893. 894.**895. 896. 897. 898. 899.**900. 901. 902. 903. 904.**905. 906. 907. 908. 909.**910. 911. 912. 913. 914.**915. 916. 917. 918. 919.**920. 921. 922. 923. 924.**925. 926. 927. 928. 929.*

*damnable guiltinesse, and doe lose their present aptitude to enter into the Kingdome of Heauen. Thus our learned men speake : and they learned it from the blessed Apostle. For he saith, that ^a they which doe ^(a) Galat. 5. ar., such things, shall not inherit the Kingdome of God. And writing to the Cerinthians, he saith, ^b Neither ^(b) 1 Cor. 6, 9. fornicators, nor Idolaters, nor adulterers, &c. shall 10, 11. inherit the Kingdome of God. And such were some of you; but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, &c. Where we may first note, that the Apostle maketh an opposition betwene being fornicators or idolaters, &c. and being washed or sanctified, after the committing of these sinnes. And this sheweth, that men being once guiltie of these sinnes, do still remaine fornicators, idolaters, &c. till they be washed and sanctified from them : which without true and serious repentance they cannot be imagined to bee. And consequently, they who haue committed such sinnes, remaine such sinners, till they haue repented. Secondly we may consider, that the Apostle saith of such sinners, that they shall not inherit the Kingdome of God: Neither fornicators, nor Idolaters, &c. And from hence it followeth, that men who haue committed these sinnes, are for the present, that is, till they repent, *deprived of all interest vnto heauen.* And in respect of all this, euery Christian should haue an especiall care to examine his soule concerning these grosser sinnes, that he doe not suffer himselfe to lye and lye in any of them.*

2. Of the same kinde are sins of *reciduation* and *relapse*, when we fall backe into the former sinne;

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after

(A) Mr. Gataker in his Spirituall Watch, § 9. pag. 12, 13.

Ioh. 5. 14.

Luk. 11. 24.

after our repentance, and vowes of a better life. For relapses into sicknesse are dangerous for the body; and relapses into sin are no lesse dangerous for the soule; and that (as a learned man hath well observed) in these 3. respects: 1. Because corrupt nature after restraint groweth more fierce: like a Mastiue that breaketh loose after he hath beene tyed; or like a River, that hath broke thorow the banke that kept it in. 2. Because Satan is more malicious against such as haue once escaped out of his fetters; like a sailour that hath recovered the prisoner that broke from him. 3. Because God layeth iudgements on such Apostates, and powreth the Spirits of slumber upon them. In which respects the sinner is in much more danger by relapse then he was before. And therefore our Saviour said to the man whom hee had cured of his lamenesse, *Sinne no more, lest a worse thing come vnto thee*: and that if the *uncleane spirit*, which hath beene cast out of a man, *do returne and finde the house swept and garnished*, that is, made fit for the habitation of such a guest, *then he goeth and taketh with him seuen other spirits more wicked then himselfe, and they enter in and dwell there; and the last state of that man is worse then the first*. By this it appeareth, that these kinde of sins into which we haue fallen before, if after our recovery we relapse into them againe, are most dangerous and preiudiciall to a mans soule. And therefore when we call our soules to account, we should more especially examine them concerning the former sinnes, which wee committed before-time, that we may see how well or how ill wee haue

haue continued the course of our repentance and amendment.

3. Sinnes that sute with our owne *dispositions*; such, I meane, as wee are inclined vnto, either through temper of nature or custome of life. For these sinnes may breede speciall danger, because we are ready to drop into them, when no other Tempter driueth vs, beside our owne corruption. Of such *Dauid* seemeth to speake, when he saith, *I kept my selfe from mine iniquitie*. And of such wee also should beware. And therefore in the daily care of our soules, wee should more especially question and examine them concerning those sinnes, to which we are addicted or disposed, either by nature or by custome.

See Mr. Gatak.
Spirituell
Watch, § 20.
pag. 24.

Psal. 18. 23.

4. The sinnes of each mans particular *calling*, or *trade*, may especially endanger him, because he hath by his very course of life, so many and so vsuall occasions to be tempted by them. Neither a day, nor scarce an houre of a day, but some businesse will come in his way, either in dealing with others, or in deliberating by himselfe, by which he may be occasioned either to omit some dutie, or to doe some wrong, or to follow some neerer way of thriving than G O D doth allow him. And amidst so many and frequent occasions, it will bee hard to stand vpright, without much care and watchfulnes. And therefore as *S. Paul* prescribeth vnto seuerall men, the duties that belong to their seuerall states and conditions; as to him *that hath the gift of prophecie, that bee prophecie according to the proportion of faith*; and to him

Gatak Spirituell
Watch, § 19. pag. 22.

Rom. 12. 6.

him that hath an office, that he waite upon his office; and so he that teacheth, on teaching, &c: so, if we desire to looke into the state of our soules, and to learne from our owne hearts, how well or how ill we have done our duties, we should haue an especiall eye to such things as appertaine to our particular places and callings.

3. The sinnes of the *time*, *place* and *companie* in which we liue, haue speciall danger in them. For first, they will draw vs by their very *example* to partake with them; in so much, as that men who at the beginning do abhorre them, yet by continuance of time, are insensibly carried with them, before themselves can tell how. And secondly, *will men* do desire *companie* in their sinne, and do vsually strine by all perswasions to winne ouer to their side, those that are better affected. And therefore Solomon saith; *My sonne, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not. If they say, Come with vs, let vs lay waite for blood, &c; we shall finde all precious substance, wee shall fill our houses with spoile; cast in thy lot among vs, let vs all haue one purse: My sonne, walke not thou in the way with them, &c.* In which words, Solomon first supposeth that sinners will entice, and vse all plausible allurements to perswade others to their society; and then hee aduiseeth the righteous to take heede of them and their sugred baits. And so, if we liue among such men, we must expect prouocation from them, and therefore should vse all prouidence for freeing of our selues of them. Thirdly, wicked men, if they cannot winne others

(*) PROVL. I. 10,
&c.

others to take part with them, yet they will molest them, because their contrarie life is an open shame to these mens dealings. And therefore the Wise man bringeth in the wicked, thus deliberating or rather resolving with themselves; ^(a) *Let vs lye in waite for the righteous, because he is not for our turne, and he is cleane contrarie to our doings: he upbraideth vs with our offending the Law, and obiecteth to our infamie the trasgressings of our education.—He was made to reprove our thoughts, he is grievous to vs, even to behold: for his life is not like ather mens, his waies are of another facion: &c.* And this daily molestation from the wicked, will make good men afraid to doe well, for feare of giuing offence, or incurring danger: which made David to say, that ^(b) *the rod of the wicked should not rest upon the lot of the righteous: lest the Righteous put forth their hands unto iniquitie:* implying, that if the wicked were suffered still to scourge and molest Gods people, it might bee a meanes to make them forsake their integritie, either by seeking to pacifie the wicked, or to protect themselves. By these considerations it appeareth, that in the company of euill men are many prouocations to sinne, partly by their bate example, partly by their euill counsell, and most of all by derision and reproches, or by oppression and iniuries. In respect whereof, wee may say, as S. ^(c) *Hieron out of Cyprian, [Nullus diu tutus periculo proximi;]. No man can be long safe that is alwaies in danger. And therefore as men that live in a bad ayre, or in time of a generall contagion, are the more carefull to fence and arme*

^(a) Wisd. 1. 13.
&c.

^(b) Psal. 125. 3.

^(c) Hieron. in
libra. Com-
mentar. in A-
mos Proem.
ad Pammach.

^(d) M^r. Gata-
ker in lib. Spi-
rituall Watch
§ 22. pag. 27.

themselves by taking of preservatives, by eating before they goe abroad, &c: So, if a man live in such a place and among such company, as where sinne doth beare sway; he should haue a speciall care to arme himselfe against the sinnes of that time and place, and to watch ouer his soule, lest hee should be infected with the common corruption.

These and such like sinnes as these, because they breede the greatest danger, are to bee sifted and censured with the greatest care. And so wee see that wise men haue held the like course in matters of this life, and haue found good successe by it. When the King of Syria was to fight with Israel, hee commanded his Captaines, *a Fight neither with small nor great, save onely with the King of Israel.* And the euent sheweth, that the course was good: for when the King was slaine, *b a Proclamation then went throughout the Host, Every man to his Citie, and every man to his owne Country.* And in like sort *Agessilus* *c* gaue aduice to the Lacedemonians in a certaine battell against the Thebans, that they should omit all others, and fight onely against *Epaminondas*, who was the Leader of the Field, and a man of as great wildome as courage: and he gaue this reason for it, because he being killed, it would be easie to conquer all the rest: which (as my Author saith) fell out accordingly. And so, when *Goliath* was slaine, the Philistines seeing that their Champion was dead, fled before Israel. And so in like manner in our conflicts with sinne, it will be good counsell, that sometimes omitting all other vices, we bend our selues wholly against that sinne

which

(a) 1 King. 22.

31.

(b) Ver. 36.

(c) In pugna ad Mantiniam Lucianus est Lacedaemonius, ut ostendit reliquis, in solo in pugnantem Epaminondam, solo iniquis prudentis esse fortis, et illo necato, facilem fore de reliquis victurum: id quod etiam ex alio, Plut. Apophth. in Agessilo, pag. 214. C.

(d) 1 Sam. 17.

32.

which troubleth vs most: because if once wee haue quelled our master-sinnes, the Devils great Leaders and Champions, it will bee the more easie to chase away the rest. And for this cause, in the performance of this worke of Examination, a speciall care must bee had against these great Commanders, that they escape not away in the throng.



CHAP. IIII.

Of the maner to be obserued in this worke, or how a Christian should proceede in examining of himselfe.



He matter being declared, the next thing to be considered, is the manner: for direction wherein, three things are in the beginning to bee noted.

1. That in all works of this kinde, the maner 1. Note.
is much what to be regulated by the matter and the end. For Examination, in what kinde soever it be, being a searching or enquirie after something that we desire to know, is alwaies to be so performed, as may best serue for the bolting out of that truth which we search for. And as the matter, whereof the question is, and the end for which the enquirie is made, and the discoverie which is desired in this worke, doe differ and disagree; so the manner of proceeding in making the search,

will be different and vnlike it selfe, as the things whereto it is applyed do require. As for example, if the Goldsmith be to try his metall, hee vseth the touchstone and the fornace, because these are the proper meanes which his arte doth teach for finding out that which hee desireth to know. And if the Carpenter be to try his worke that hee hath framed, whether it be agreeable to arte, and fit for vse, he vseth his squire and line and compass, because they being applyed to his worke, will shew how well it is fitted for the purpose. And so in like maner, if a Physician bee to try the state of his Patient, hee looketh vpon the vrine, feeleth the pulse, and obserueth the symptomes. And if a Iudge be to examine a suspected person, he questioneth him about circumstances, and examineth him vpon such interrogatories, as may entangle any man that meaneth by glozing shifts to obscure the truth. Thus in examinations men follow that course which is fiteable to the matter, and peculiar for that end whereto it is referred.

2. Note.

(4) Cap. 2.

2. That Examination, as heere it is intended, being a *discussion* of a mans life, for discerning his spirituall state, is a kinde of *iudicarie* proceeding, as hath beene shewed a already. And therefore look what course Iudges do hold in their Sessions, or at their Assises, the like course will bee fit to be held in this worke. Now in their Sessions, this is the course: They first enquire into the *facts* of men, and that enquire is made by the testimony of witnesses, and other proofes that may shew what their deedes haue beene: and secondly, when they

they have found out the truth of the fact, then they goe to the *rule* of the *Law*, and that being laid to the fact, directeth the Iudge to giue sentence according vnto right. And so in these *Sessions* kept in the *conscience*, and held for the ordering of our soules, wee haue two things to enquire after; the one what our *actions* and *facts* haue beene, so farre forth as they concerne our spirituall life. And for finding out thereof, our best prooffe is the testimony of our owne conscience: which will be as *good as a thousand witnesses*, if our selues corrupt it not. And the other is, how well these actions doe agree with *Gods Law*, (which is the Law that bindeth the conscience, and concerneth the soule;) that thence wee may learne what to iudge of our life, how farre forth it agreeth with Gods Law, or swarveth from it.

3 That the method or order of proceeding, is not altogether the same when our Examination is concerning the *principall* Object or some particular sinne, as it is when it is applyed to the *generall* Object or all the moral actions of a mans life. And therefore I will consider them seuerally and apart.

1. And first for the *generall* Object, and for the sifting of our conscience thereabout, wee must compare our life with Gods Law; & that may be done two wayes. For we may either begin with *Gods Law*, and first see what it doth require at our hands, and thence proceed to our selues, and question with our soules, how and wherein wee haue observed or transgressed those rules. Or second-

ly, we may beginne with our selues, and enquire what our doings are, and then goe to Gods Law, that we may learne what to iudge of such works.

If we begin with Gods Law, then we must doe two things.

First, we must get a competent *knowledge* of Gods Law, that we may know in some measure what each precept doth require of vs, and what the meaning is of all such Commandements as concerne our practice, the summe whereof is contained in the Decalogue or ten Commandements. For as an vnskillfull man is neuer the neerer for a *line* or *rule*, if he haue not beene taught the *Carpenters Trade*, nor knoweth not the vse of these things; no more can a Christian be any whit the better for hearing or hauing of *Gods Law* to direct him, vnlesse he know the meaning of it, and can tell what vices are forbidden, and what vertues are commanded in euery Precept. Whence it followeth, that they which haue neuer beene trained vp in the grounds of Religion, nor haue not the knowledge of their Catechisme, cannot possibly goe about this so necessary a worke with any dexterity or profit to their soules.

Secondly, when a man hath learned in some good sort the meaning of the Commandements, then in the second place he is to go through these Commandements one by one, and in each of them to consider what finnes are there condemned, and what duties are there enioyned, and hereupon still to question with his owne heart, *And haue I committed this sinne?* or, *Haue I neglected*
that

that duty? or, If I haue kept the precept, for the matter, yet haue I not broken it in the manner of performance, or in the intention of my minde? And thus we may proceed, when we begin with Gods Law.

But if we begin first with our selues, then wee may hold this course: first, (after some competent knowledge of the Law, which is euer presupposed in this worke,) we must take a view of our life, or of so much of it, as then we are occasioned and purposed to examine, and consider from time to time, and from one moment to another, how we haue beene busied, in what sort wee behaued our selues in it, and what haue beene our deedes, words, and thoughts, that deserue scanning: and hereupon we must still question with our selues, vpon every worke that admitteth such a question, what therein hath beene done amisse, or how we haue transgressed in the matter, or in the manner, or in the end, or in any circumstance. In which kinde, that we may proceede the more orderly, and vnderstand our selues and our estate the more distinctly, we must not passe ouer things in the grosse, and lay vp too much of our life in a generall and indistinct consideration; but rather labour to part and diuide our time by smaller parcels, that so we may see euery thing apart and by it selfe. For which purpose, those who haue not better directions already, may be pleased to make vse of these.

1. If we be to take a generall account of our whole life, and to examine our selues from our
be-

beginning to the present time; wee may diuide our life severall wayes. As first, by the times of our age, how we were busied, and in what manner we carried our selves towards God, when we were boyes, and when afterward we were young men, and when men of middle age; and so on to our present time. Secondly, we may diuide our life by the severall callings and conditions of life, in which we have spent our time: as what wee did when we were Scholars at the Grammar schoole; what, when we were servants, or Apprentices, or vnder Tutors and Gardians; what, when wee became Free-men, or housholders, or at our owne liberty and disposing; and what in the exercising of our particular trade or profession or course of life. As namely, *Clergie* men may consider how they haue dealt in their exercise of the Ministry, *Magistrates* in their places of government, *Merchants* in their trafficking, *Craftsmen* in their occupations, & every man in that vocation wherunto he is called, & in that professi^on^{wh} he doth exercise & bestow his life in. Thirdly, we may againe part and (as it were) subdiuide the time of our speciall calling by the speciall businesses which wee haue gone thorow, while we haue liued in it; as a *Merchant* may consider of his dealing, how iust or vniust it hath been in the commodities which he hath carried forth into the Indies, into the Easterne Countries, and into other Kingdomes abroad; and how he behaued himselfe in fetching this or that commodity from such and such parts, and in venting his wares abroad after they were
come

come home. &c. And so may other men do in the like cases, concerning the principall businesses and occasions, that occurre or happen in their severall professions or callings.

2. If we be to consider of some lesser portion of our life, (as religious men have beene accustomed to doe, by considering that time which hath passed them since their last either ordinarie or more solemne Examination,) then wee may part our moneths by weekes, and our weekes by daies, and each day by his severall houres; that our taske for the present being the lesse, our care and labour about each particular may be the greater.

These directions for the maner of proceeding in this generall Examination, I have represented to such as shall vouchsafe to reade this schedule; leaving them notwithstanding to their owne choise, which of these wayes they will follow, or whether they will follow any of them at all, if so bee they know how to vse a better in steade of them. For those who are accustomed to these asceticall exercises of deuotion, may perhaps deuise other more fitting courses or wayes of proceeding then these are: and it is reason, yea and a point of wisdom too, for every man to make vse of those rules, which in his owne experience hee findeth most proper to his owne nature, and most powerfull for his reformation and amendment. I will onely adde thus much more before I goe on, that the more kindes and wayes of proceeding that euery man vseth, the more knowledge hee will gaine of his owne estate, and the more will he be

enabled to resist sinne, and to reforme his life and behauiour: for that which escapeth him in one manner and course of proceeding, may meete him in another; and what one course leaueth vnperfect, that the next may supply. And thus much shall serue for the *generall* Obiect.

II. Secondly, for the *particular* Obiect, and our examination about it, we may for our direction therein make vse of these and such like rules.

Rule. 1.

1. We must single out some predominant and dangerous sinne, and bestow our care about it for the time: first *enquiring* how, and when, and vpon what occasion wee haue fallen into it before-time; and then settling in our selues a *purpose* of heart to forbear it for the time to come. In vnder-taking of which purpose or resolution, it will be expedient, for our more easie & certaine victorie, to set to our selues some short space, in which we will force our selues to forbear that sinne: as namely that we will doe it for this present day, or till the next time that we shall examine our conscience againe, or the like. And when the prefixed time is come, we should question our selues, how well we haue performed that which we purposed to doe; and how and wherein we haue failed: and then begging pardon for our defects, we must beginne a new purpose, and prescribe our selues a like time for shunning of the same sinne: and so on from day to day, still correcting our former error, and still renewing our first purpose, till we haue gotten a full victorie. This rule is prescribed, and was obserued by *Plutarch* for repressing

(a) De Ira cohibenda, in Seneca. pag. 464. B, C.

of immoderate anger, and heereby, in proceſſe of time be attained to a great meaſure of patience. And if we obſerue the like rule in purſuing our finnes; wee may finde a like help towards grace and goodnes.

2. In purſuit of the ſeleſted ſinne, it will be expedient not to content our ſelues with purpoſes againſt the maine ſinne in generall, but more particularly and diſtinctly to bend our ſelues againſt the ſpeciall acts; occasions and opportunities of it. As for example, Suppoſe *raſh anger* is the ſinne which a man liſteth and purſueth for the rooting of it out; it will be fitting for him to reſolue with himſelfe, not to ſpeake harſhly, not to looke fiercely, nor to uſe churliſh behauiour; whether his ſervant diſpleaſe him with negligence, or his friend offend him with vnfaithfulneſſe, or his enemy prouoke him with ill language and malicious dealing, &c. In which caſe and courſe, ſpeciall care is to be had, that wee do eſpecially ſet our ſelues againſt that act, or that occaſion, or that cauſe, by which wee doe moſt vſually offend.

3. As oft as we finde any motion of the ſinne to ſtirre and ſhew it ſelfe within vs, it will be convenient, not onely to withhold our conſent, but withall to exerciſe ſome acts of the contrary vertue. As for example, if *deſire of Reuenge* bee the ſinne which ſtirreth vp our blood and boyleth within vs, we muſt not only forbear to *auenge our ſelues*, but further alſo muſt force our ſelues to pray for him that hath offended vs, and if he *hunger*, ſo feed him; and if he *thirſt*, ſo giue him drink; and to doe for him any other office of loue, as occaſion ſhall

serue. This Rule, if it be duly and sincerely obserued, will be able in time to quell the rage of the sinne, and will make it lesse forward to sollicite vs afterward, when it hath found such entertainment from vs already.

Rule 4.

4. If in our daily Examination, we finde that we haue beene defectiue in performing of what we purposed, especially if our failings haue beene grear and dangerous; then it will not be amisse to *amerce* and punish our selues for such either our slothfulnesse or wilfulnesse. As namely, to enioine our selues some extraordinary *abstinence* from meate, recreation or ease; or by way of a Fine, to giue some forfeiture out of our purses, or to vse some such other holy reuenge vpon our selues, the feare or smart whereof may make vs more carefull for afterward.

And this may suffice for the method and manner of proceeding.

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CHAP. V.

Of the times of Examination, in which it is to be exercised.



He next thing to be considered, is, what may bee the fittest times for this exercise. And the times to be considered are two; *when* and *how often* it is to be vsed. For answer where to, the Scriptures, for ought that I know or can obserue, haue determined no set or precise time,

time, which is necessarie alwaies to be obserued in the performance of this worke. Notwithstanding some rules there are, partly pointed at in the Scripture, and partly prescribed by holy men, which wee may make vse of for our good. And they so farre as I can gather and obserue, be these and such like.

1. There is no danger of sursetting vpon too much, nor need we feare lest we do performe it too often. For first, the oftener we reckon with our soules, the fewer new things we shall haue at euery time to reckon for; and the fewer the things be, the more readily will they be called to minde, and they may bee scanned the more exactly: whereas multitude of things, if they come together, will hide one another, and take time one from another, and hinder the notice each of other; and still it may bee expected, that where many businesses are tumbled in together, some will escape away in the throng. And secondly, the oftener we take account, the fresher will our deedes and actions be in remembrance; because being lately done, they haue not had space to slip out of our mindes. And therefore the oftener, the better: nor can there lightly be any danger in being too diligent. The consideration whereof made St. Bernard say of this worke, ^a [*Si semper hoc quum opus est facis semper facis*;] If ye will doe this as often as there is neede of it, ye must doe it alwaies. And it may bee thought, that in respect heereof, the Prophet, speaking of this worke, did double his words, ^b *Let vs (saith hee) search and*

(a) Bern. in
Cantic. Sermon
58. in fine.
page 742.

(b) Lam. 3. 40.

try our waies : implying, that as he doth double his words, so we should double the worke, and after we haue done it once, doe it yet ooe againe.

2. The time that learned and deuout men haue beene accustomed to obserue, and doe thinke most convenient for an ordinary practice of this dutie is, that once every day at least, every man should consider of all such things as haue passed since his last reckoning. So saith S. Chrysostome,

(a) *Hoc fiat singulis diebus.*

Et quod factu in

pecunia, nec finis

ut duo dies pra-

tereaui, quincom

sanulis rationem

meam, et confusi-

onem inducat

oblitis: Vnde &

et sic mecum

et sic mecum

et sic mecum

et sic mecum

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Let this account be kept every day: and That which thou doest in a matter of money, which is, that thou sufferest not two daies to overpasse thee without reckoning with thy seruant; lest forgetfulnesse should breed confusion in the reckoning; doe the same also in matters of thy soule, and actions of thy life, every day. And the same Father, preaching vpon that

Text, b

My sinne is euer before me,

noteth that the

Saints in old time

were used to forget their vertues,

and remember their sinnes;

not as men now a dayes

(saith hee) do use to doe, who put their sinnes out

of their remembrance. And heereupon he aduise

th vs not long after, in the same Sermon; d

Hast thou

not a Booke in thine house, wherein thou writest thy

daily accounts? Haue also a like Booke in thy consci-

ence; and write therein thy daily transgressions. I

meane, (saith he) when thou layest thee downe vpon

thy bed,—bring forth thy Booke, and take an account

of thy sinnes. And to like purpose speake many

others, as may further be seene in the next rule fol-

lowing.

3. The time which learned and wise men haue

allotted for this worke, is especially in the Eue-

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ning or at night : because that time is a time of vacation and leisure. For in the day time wee haue our Trades to follow , and our markets to make, and our Law. suites to attend on, and our friends to talke with, and our families to provide for ; and one businesse or other will euer be coming in the way, and interrupt vs : but the night is a time of priuatenesse and retirednesse, when occasions of the world being ouerpasse, we haue the more freedome to conferre with our soules. To this purpose it is, that *Danid* tooke the night time to meditate in ; ^a *I haue remembered thy name,* ^(a) *Psal. 119. 55.* *O Lord, in the night, and haue kept thy Law.* And that time he tooke to lament his sinnes ; ^b *Euery* ^(b) *Psal. 6. 6.* *night* (saith he) *I make my bed to swimme, and water* ^(c) *Psal. 77. 8.* *my couch with my teares.* And that time hee tooke ^(d) *Psal. 4. 4.* also to examine his soule in ; ^e *I call to remembrance* ^(e) *Post cunam* *my song in the night ; I commune with mine owne* *inquit, quando* *heart.* And that time he biddeth vs also take for *in dormitum,* *quando estis de-* *the like purpose ;* ^d *Commune with your owne heart* *prospicte, multa* *upon your bed, and be still.* Vpon which words of *quies & silentiū,* *et nemine inter-* *the Prophet,* we haue this note given vs by *turbante profun-* *St. Chrysostom :* ^e *What meaneth this,* (saith he) *that* *da tranquillitas,* *extrema iudicium* *he saith,* *Commune with your hearts vpon your beds?* *conscientia. —* *And he answereth,* It is this ; *Quando neq̃* *After supper time,* *amicas intertur-* *when ye are going to sleepe, and are ready to lye downe* *bas, nec famulas* *on bed, and haue great quietnesse and silence, without* *irritas, nec turba-* *the presence or disturbance of any, then erect a Tribu-* *negotiorū uiget ;* *nall for the conscience.* And a little after ; *tunc uisa inter-* *When nei-* *dei alia rationē* *ther friend doth disturb thee, nor seruants prouoke* *exigit Chryso-* *thee, nor multitude of businesses doth presse thee ; then* *Expos. in Psal.* *take account of thy life, what thou hast done in the* *4. 4. pag. 26.* *day.* *C, D.*

(a) *Quid in lecto tuo iaces, nec quisquam est qui tibi megitium faciat, antequam somnus irrepas, libellum in mediis producat, et peccata tua tecum recita, dicens apud teipsum, Numquid hodierno die, vel sermone vel opere peccavi?* Chry. Hom. 2. in Pl. 50. pag. 1004, 1005.

(b) *Quid tempore id facientis spatium non habes; verum et Professorum metus, & sodalium colloquia, et negotiorum cura, & alenda prolium studiis, & uxoris procuratio, ac paranda mentis sollicitudo, & pavore* Orat. 1. in Pl. 1005.

(c) *Completo iam die, omni opere cum corporis, tum spiritus etiam absolute, meo tibi adhibeas, ac aspice, & meum tibi diuinitis iudicium tibi illuc rapulas.* Basil. to. 2. de Institut. Monac. in fine, pag. 196. C.

(d) *Docuerunt nos sepe patres nostri, quo pacto purgamus nos ipsos per singulos dies, ut scilicet in vespertina perseverentium nobiscum, quomodo transactam diem exegerimus, et rursus mane quando nossem.* &c. Doroth. to. 1. Biblioth. Port. edit. Grecol. Doctrina II. pag. 314.

(e) *Sedat iudicem iustitia, flet res et seipsum accusam conscientia. Nemo te plus diligit; nemo te fidelius indicabit. Mane prateritum nolle fac à teipso exactionem, & ventura dei tu tibi indicito cautionem. Vespere dies praterit, rationem erige, et superuenientium nolle fac indicationem.* Bern. de vita solit. ad frat. de Mont. Dis. p. 1039. D.

day time before. And the same Father in another place, *a When thou lai'st thee downe vpon thy bed, and no man is by to disturb thee, before sleep came on, bring forth the booke of thy conscience. & recount thy sins with thy selfe, saying to thy selfe, HAVE I THIS DAY OFFENDED IN WORD OR DEEDE? Hee addeth, b In the day thou hast net time for thim worke; but feare of Superiors, and conference with friends, and care of businesse, and forecasting for education of children, & prouision for wife, & preparation for diet, and a thousand things beside do distract thee. And to like purpose S. Basil, c When the day (saith he) is ended, and businesse are past, before rest or sleepe, it is expedient that euery mans conscience should be iudged of his owne heart. And Dorothens saith, d that it was a rule from their forefathers, how men ought to cleanse them selues, that in the euening they should question them selues, how they had passed the day, and againe in the morning, how they had passed the night. And Bernard; e Let iustice sit and iudge, let the conscience stand impleaded and accusing it selfe. No man loneth thee more, nor no man will iudge thee better. In the morning exact an account of the night past, and impose vpon thy selfe watchfulnes for the day to come. In the euening require a reckoning of the day past, and*

lay an injunction for the night comming. And in like manner speake other spirituall Masters, who vndertake to prescribe rules of a religious life. Whereby it may be seene, how they do generally agree vpon it, as a receiued Principle, that euery night men should take accounts and examine themselves for the day past: but in the two last authorities we may further note, that besides the accounting at night for the day past, they require also a reckoning each morning for the former night. And surely that is not to no purpose: for euen in the night reserved for rest, there do many times passe thoughts, affections, purposes, yea and some actions also, which as they do well deserue censure, so may easily be forgotten, if they be deferred till multitude of busineses the day following, haue bred a confusion in the memorie.

4 It is a very fit time for this worke, when we haue beene about some important businesse, in which there may bee occasion either of doing good, or of offending in some speciall manner. Thus Iob, * when his sonnes had beene feasting, because great cheare and much merriment are most times occasions of some sinne; therefore at their returne home he called them together and sanctified them, and offered burnt offerings according to the number of them all. For Iob said, *It may be my sonnes haue sinned, and cursed God in their heart. Thus did Iob continually.* And thus Christians should doe, when they returne from making purchases, or striking of bargaines, or following of Law-suites, or feasting with their friends, or debating of controuerfies, or any other the like

works and employments of moment, they should call together their thoughts, and examine their hearts concerning all the former passages, and sanctifie their soules by lamenting their sinne, and purposing a better life.

Lam. 3. 40.

It is a fit time also to examine our consciences, when we haue some speciall occasion to prepare our selues for God, or to intreate his fauour in some speciall sort. Thus the Church of *Israhel*, when they were in distresse, and fighed to God for reliefe, they encouraged each other, *Let vs search and try our waies, and turne againe to the Lord.* And *S. Paul*, when the Lords Supper was to be administered, because it was a matter of great weight, and might breede much harme to the unworthie Receiver, therefore prescribe this rule of preparation to all that minde to partake of that Sacrament: *Let a man examine himselfe: and so let him eate of the bread, and drinke of this cup.* And so in like manner, if we be in any distresse or danger by reason of our sinnes, that is a fit time to examine our selues, that by serious repentance wee may goe to beget pardon. And if wee bee to receiue the blessed Supper of our Lord, then wee should examine also, lest being vnprepared for so holy a worke, we prove vnworthy partakers of Christs body. And if we keepe a fasting day, for the humiliation of our soules, that is a fit time, that by taking a view of our sinnes, we may bee the more affected with sorrow. And if we keepe a Sabbath day, or some great day of fastiury vnto the Lord, that also is a fit time; that our soules hauing by examination bene purged from our sinnes, wee

1 Cor. 11. 28.

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may bee prepared to heare, and pray, and praise God with attention and zeale. But especially if wee be cast vpon our *sick beds*, in danger of death, and in expectation of our dissolution, then is a most vrgent time to take account of our soules, that our reckonings may be made euen, before we be called to account at Gods Tribunall seate. For as the *tree falleth; so it lyeth*: and if wee die vnprepared, we shall be vnable to answer him who is the Iudge of quick and dead. In these therefore, and all other cases of like moment and consequence, there is great cause to vse this worke.

Lastly, besides those daily and casuall times, it is a conuenient time also, after some good space passed in this manner, to examine our selues ouer againe; as for example, after a moneth or after a yeere to consider our selues for the moneth or yeere last passed, that thereby we may see how wee haue profited, or how wee haue decayed for that space of time. For *as our members grow, and our shape every day changeth, and our black haire turne gray, while we perceiue it not, nor can tell when and how these changes come; yet after some space of time we may easily discern, that so we are changed*: so it is in the state of our soules, besides the manifest changes of it, which do appeare while they are in doing, there are certaine insensible alterations, which are not to bee discerned, but after some continuance of time. And for the rectifying of these, it is necessarie to take a more generall view of our soules, then in euery dayes examination we can doe; that we may see wherein wee are better or worse, or how our

(a) Sicut non sentimus quo modo crescunt membra, proficiunt corpora, mutatur species, nigredo capillarum albescit in canis; Hoc quippe omnia, nobis nescientibus, aguntur in nobis: ita mens nostra per momenta viuendi ipsa carnis usu a semetipsa permutatur. Greg. Moral. lib. 25. c. 6.

zeale is increased or decayed, ouer that which it was a moneth, or halfe a yeere, or a yeere, or longer time before. For by this meanes we shall not onely see our grosser and more apparent faults, but euen our decay of seruour and religion, which creepeth vpon vs vnawares, and so learne to blow the coales of zeale, and to stirre vp the grace of

(a) Apoc. 3. 2.

God that is in vs, that wee may *strengthen the things which remaine, and are ready to dye.* For which purpose the Ancients haue beene accustomed to vse the time of Lent, as I haue shewed in

(b) Treatise of Fasting, chap.

10. pag. 129, & 131.

an^b other place more fully.

CHAP. VI.

Of the benefits of this worke, or what good vse it may serue a Christian for.

HAuing hitherto in some measure declared the nature of Examination, with the *aduncts* appertaining thereto, I come now in the last place to consider the *benefits* that wee may reape by it: the consideration whereof may animate vs to abound in this worke of the Lord, when we shall know that our labour is not in vaine in the Lord. And for that purpose I haue gathered and obserued these vses following.

Examination
is a good
meanes for
Repentance.
1. Reason.

I. It will be a good meanes to fit and leade vs to repentance and amendment: and that in two respects,

1. Because it will serue to discover vnto vs our sinnes,

finnes, and make vs see our wretched and miserable condition. For we (such is our frailty and corruption) do daily, yea hourly commit many finnes, which through heedlesnes or vnskilfulnesse, or strength of passion, or because wee are intent vpon some other businesse which then taketh vpall our thoughts; we obserue not, or discern not for the present. But businesse ended, and the occasions and tentations passed, when we are more free both from distraction and passion; if then wee take a time to bethinke our selues, and to recall all that is past; then our thoughts will be our owne, and wee shall in cold blood be able to see many things, which before went vnspied. Then, for example, we shall be able to tell
“our owne soules. Such a time I met with a bon-
“companion, and ouer-shot my selfe with ex-
“cesse of drink; and such a time I met with a wan-
“ton Minion, who inuigled me with her looks,
“and I was ensnared with her loue; and such a
“time I met with a crosse-neighbour, and my
“heart did rise against him at the very sight of
“him; and at such a time I met with some merry
“mates, and in our idle chat I disgraced my
“neighbour behinde his backe; and such a time,
“when I was in praying or hearing, my heart was
“wandring about the vanities of the world, or my
“selfe fell asleepe while God was admonishing
“me of things belonging to my soule: and many
“times in one day I haue sinned against God by
“vnjust dealing with my neighbour. One I decei-
“ued by a lie, and another by vnsound commo-
“dities, and a third by counterfeit & base money,
H 3, “and

“and a fourth by faire promises and protestations, which I neuer meant to performe. And an hundred other such sins as these we might discover in our selues within a short time, if we did take accounts of our selues at convenient times. And if our finnes were once in this sort set before our face, they would make vs tremble for feare, and blush for shame, and giue no rest to our heads, nor slumber to our eyes, till by sorrow and repentance we had made our peace with our God.

2. Reason.

2. Examination rightly performed, will bee a meanes to leade vs to repentance, because it will shew vs with what patience and long-suffering God hath borne with vs, and in what desperate case our soules stood, but that God in mercie spared vs beyond our deseruing. For it will appeare that he might haue stricken vs dead many a time, while we were prouoking him by our finnes. For example, while wee were drunke, and could not speake a readie word; or while wee were satisfying our vncleane lusts in the Harlots bed; or while wee were abusing Gods Name by profane oathes and execrations; or while we were taking a bribe to pervert Iustice; or while wee were telling a lye to vndermine our neighbours; then and at such an instant God might haue cut vs off, and haue drawne vs to the Iudgement with a harlot in our armes, or a blasphemous oath in our mouths, or a bribe of oppression in our hands, or a murderous and malicious thought in our hearts. And if then God had taken vs away, as he rooke away a *Elab* in his drunkenesse, and b *Belshazzar* in his profanenesse, and c *Herod* in his haughti-

(a) 1 Kin. 16.9

(b) Dan. 5.1, 3,

&c. with ver.

30.

(c) Act. 12. 21,

23, 23.

haughtinesse, and ^a *Zimri* and *Cushi* in their vn- (a) Numb. 25.
 cleannesse: Lord, what might haue become of ^{6,7,8.}
 my poore soule? Or, what could I haue expe-
 cted, but to haue died in sinne without repen-
 tance, and to haue liued euer after in torment
 without hope? But he hath spared me, and it is
 his mercy thus by his patience to bring me to re-
 pentance, that I might bee saued. Now what
 Christian heart would not tremble to think what
 great danger he hath escaped, and would not melt
 into teares to remember what great mercy he hath
 receiued? And what soule would not be moued
 hereby to hasten his repentance, either that hee
 might prevent all such danger hereafter to him-
 selfe, or that he might shew a thankfull heart to
 God, that hath spared him in such manner?

And in this sort will Examination leade vs to
 repentance and amendment, if we vse it diligently
 and in due order. And that is the first vse for
 which this worke doth serue.

I. Secondly, it will be a good meanes to pre-
 vent future finnes; and that in two respects also.

1. Because the finding out of our former er-
 rors, and the finnes that be past, will lay before
 our eyes our speciall infirmities, and will make vs
 see both the corruptions that cleave closest vnto
 vs, and the tentations that ofteneſt preuaile with
 vs. For if the accounts be diligently made, one
 will finde, that he is sooneſt overcome with pride;
 and another, that he is ofteneſt taken with lust;
 and another with vaine-glory; and another
 with couengefull thoughts; and every one with
 somewhat, to which he is inclined by nature or
 custome,

Examination
 a meanes to
 prevent sinne.
 1 Reason.

custome, or to which he is allured by ill company and daily tentations, or to which hee is forced by threatnings or feare of offending. And when once we see how we were misled, and what it was that deceiued or overcame vs; we shall heereby learne how to discover the danger, and how to arme our selues against the assault; and how to handle our weapons when occasion shall require: and euery former error will make vs more wise and more wary against the next on-set. For as among men, he that findeth himselfe to haue been deceiued with faire words, will neuer trust that party any more; and as he that hath been coozened by counterfeit wares, will learne by that error to iudge better of the like commodities for afterward: so in the case of our soules, a wise Christian, by every error that he hath committed and discovered, will learne more wisdome to prevent the like danger.

2. Reason.

2. Examination will be a meanes to prevent sinne, because hauing humbled vs with sorrow, it will make vs afraid of the like smart, and resolute to stand out against all tentations. For we vsually say, that the *childe* that hath beene once burned in the flame, will feare to come neere the fire any more: and so when by discussing our conscience, wee haue learned to condemne our selues, as wretched Caitifes vnworthy of any mercy, the smart of that which is past will make vs afraid to come neere the like danger for euer after. Nor will any man bee so prone to offend, if hee know that once within 24. houres he must come to correction, and be censured by the iust sentence of his

his owne conscience. So St. Chrysostome, ^(a) *The soule, (saith he) being afraid of the sentence that passed on him the day before, will be more slow to offend, lest he do againe incurre the same censure, and be lashed and beaten as before he was.* And St. Ambrose, ^(b) *While we bewaile sins past, we exclude sinnes to come: and the censuring of our euill doings, is a disciplining of vs to innocency of life.* And Seneca, bending himselfe against the vice of immoderate anger, for the moderating or rather abolishing of it, thinketh this worke of Examination, in which we passe censure vpon our selues, will be most effectuall. For, *Anger (saith he) will cease, and become more coole, when it knoweth it must come every day before a Iudge that will not spare it.* And surely, no man will either shame himselfe euery day before God and his owne conscience, nor iudge and condemn himselfe for his misdoings, vnlesse he both meane to amend them, and find some sweetnesse and comfort in the practice of this vngreatfull worke. In regard whereof, I may truly say, (and that shall be the clause of this point,) Either examining will make a man leaue his sinning, or sinning will make him leaue off examining.

III. Thirdly, the due performance of this worke, will make vs more *indifferent* and more equall in iudging of our neighbours and brethren. For if a man do not sift his soule, and discover his owne corruption; selfe-loue and pride, bred in mans nature euer since *Adams* fall, will make him to over-weene himselfe, and vnder-value others. And this is the chiefe reason why men are so fauourable towards their owne faults, and so

^(a) Anima he-
sternum verita-
tudinem, ne tan-
dem rursus sube-
at sententiam, et
torquetur et fla-
gelletur, peditur
ad peccatum ter-
dior. Chrysost.
in Psal. 4. pag.
17.C.
^(b) Dum dolemus
admissa, admi-
tenda excludi-
mus, et fit que-
dam de conuinc-
tione uisus,
disciplina inno-
centie. Ambros.
rom. 4. de Pen-
nit. lib. 2. cap.
10. pag. 413.
^(c) Desinet ira,
et eris moderati-
or, que scies sibi
quotidie ad iu-
dicij esse venien-
dum. Seneca
de Ira, lib. 3.
cap. 36. p. 199.

peremptory against other mens. But if men by sifting their soules, haue discovered their finnes, the sense of their owne wants, will make them more pittifull towards others: as St. Paul implyeth, when he exhorteth men to meeknesse towards other men from this consideration, because **themselves were sometimes unwise, disobedient, &c.* and from this, **Lest themselves also be tempted.* And where St. Paul saith of himselfe, **that he was chiefe of sinners,* S. Bernard noteth, **that he spake this not falsely, out of rashnesse and temerity, but feelingly, and out of the sense and esteeme that he had of his finnes. For hee that by examining himselfe, doth thoroughly vnderstand himselfe, thinketh no mans sin to be equall to his owne, which he knoweth not so well as his owne.* And therefore, if men would carefully performe this worke in examining themselves, they would not rashly condemne others without cause.

(a) Tit. 3. 23.

(b) Gal. 6. 1.

(c) 1 Tim. 1. 15.

(d) *Neq. hoc dicebat Paulus mendiandi principium, sed ostendit affectionem. Qui enim perfecte examinanda scripta intelligit, suo peccato nullam precationem par. efficitur, quod non sicut finem intelligit. Bern. de vita solitar. ad fratres de Monte Dei. pag. 1030. I. *Examination comforteth against despair.*

IIII. * This daily reckoning with our selves, will be a meanes to strengthen vs against *despaire*, and to comfort vs in a time of *temptation* and *fear*. For if the Deuill shall present our finnes before our face, and aggravate them, that hee may drive vs to *despaire*; then our former practice of this dutie will be a helpe to support vs two waies.

1. Because by often reckoning with our soules, we haue gotten the true knowledge of our states; we haue found out our sins, both which they be, and of what qualitie they are: and therefore wee shall not so easily be deceived by Satan, if he presse them beyond their pitch, and aggravate them beyond their condition, as in times of *distresse* hee usually doth.

2. Because

2. Because by this daily reckoning and iudging of our selues, we haue made all euen betweene God and our soules. For hauing confessed our sinnes, and censured our selues, and fled to God for forgiueneſſe, we haue his promiſe of remiſſion and pardon. And then whatſoeuer our ſinnes be, (as certainly they are both the ſeuer and the leſſer for the performance of this worke, but whatſoeuer they be) we know they cannot hurt vs, becauſe God hath forgiuen them. And theſe things will be vnto vs matter of great comfort in a time of conflict and diſtreſſe; at which time a little peace of conſcience will be worth all the world. For whereas men that haue liued ſecurely, without caſting vp of their accounts, are in times of temptation ouerwhelmed with horroure, being neither able to giue comfort to themſelues, nor to receiue it from others: he that hath vſed a daily reckoning with his ſoule, will bee moued at the ſight of his ſinnes, rather to bleſſe God for his mercy, becauſe he hath pardoned them, than to deſpaire of his mercy, for feare that he will not pardon them.

V. Fifty and laſtly, our iudging of our ſelues in this ſort, will be a meanes to preuent Gods heauier Iudgement afterward. For God will haue our ſinnes to be diſcouered one way or other, and will haue vs to be conuicted and iudged for them: and if our ſelues do a bolt them our, and produce them, he will couer them; and if wee accuſe and condemne our ſelues, hee will abſolve and acquit vs; and if wee puniſh our offences, hee will forgiue them. Whereupon St. *Chryſoſtome* conclu-

Examination
is a meanes to
preuent Gods
Iudgement.

(a) Pro. 18. 13.
Pſal. 32. 5.
1 Cor. 11. 31
1 Ioh. 1. 9.

(a) *Letiam ergo quietem perituro, hoc iudicium intrat: idcirco animi ad hanc rem hoc tempus est.*
 Or. *Id est quotidianè diligenter facies, terribili futuro iudicio Tribunalis ipsius affici.* Chrysost.
 Hom. 44 in Matth. pag. 398. B.
 (b) *Zeph. 1. 12.*
 (c) *Psalm. 50. 21.*
 (d) *Eccles. 12. ult.*

deth, that ^a if a man doe diligently every day performe this worke of examination, he may stand with comfort before the dreadfull Barre of the great Iudge. But if we neglect this dwtie, or stubber it ouer without care, he will take it into his owne hands, and will performe it to the purpose; hee ^b will search Ierusalem with candles; and hee ^c will reprove the vngodly, and set his sinnes in order before his eyes: and hee ^d will bring every worke into Iudgement, whether it be good or euill: and nothing shall goe for nought, that hath beene done against his Law. For, [*aut homine puniente, aut Deo iudicante plebentur;*] they must be punished either by our owne censure, or by the sentence of God, who is the great Iudge of all the world. And in this sort our reckoning with our selues will preuent Gods iudging of vs at the last day.

These and such like be the benefits which wee may reape by this exercise.

Out of the consideration of all which, I thinke I may iustly apply to this worke of Examination, that which Moses spake of Gods Word deliuered to the Israelites; ^a *It is no vaine thing concerning vs, because it is our life, and strength, wherby we may prolong our dayes in a blessed and happy state for evermore.* And this bare consideration is argument enough, both to commend the necessity of the worke, and to command our diligence and care for the practice of it. But yet to set a little more edge vpon our affections, wee may hence deduce foure considerations applicable to our practice and state of life.

1. We may heere by see what the cause is, why
 most

most of vs, notwithstanding our hearing, and reading, and praying, and communicating, yet do rather decay then thrive in grace. For though I will not deny, but this defect may be ascribed to some other causes also; yet seeing Examination is so usefull for *repentance*, and so powerfull for *amendment* and reformation, the neglect of this must needs breede a great defect of grace: euen as the absence of the sunne, which is the fountaine of heate, maketh way for frost and cold weather. Nor is it any maruell that *negligence* in accounting, produceth such decay in our soules; for euen the like negligence in raking of accounts in our trades, doth breede an euident decay in our worldly estates. For if wee should passe daies and weekes and moneths, without accounting our receipts and expences, euery cunning Chapman abroad would ouer-reach vs, and euery false seruant at home might robbe vs, while wee thought on no harme, nor perceived how or where in wee were wronged. Now there is no chapman so vniust to deceiue, as the Diuill is; nor any seruant so false to his master, as our owne hearts are to vs; and therefore if we passe daies and weekes and moneths, yea and yeores too, without examining our consciences, and calling our hearts to account, as most of vs doe; it is no maruell if we decay in goodnesse euery day, till at length we proue Bankrupts. Nay rather it were a wonder if wee should, long subsist, without being vnder a load of sinne: then so marvell that there is so little conscience in the world, so long as wee know that there is no more examining of the conscience among men.

2. We may obserue heere a reason why God doth many times lay crosses vpon vs, and though we pray and fast and call for mercy, yet finde not that ease nor that deliuerance which wee expect. For if Examination be so effectually for removing of Gods Iudgements, as hath beene shewed, then certainly if Gods anger doe continue vpon vs, and his hand be stretched out still, it is an euident signe, that we haue not iudged our selues, nor erected a Tribunal for the conscience within vs, as in duty and in wisdom we should haue done. Thus the Prophet threatneth the Iews with Iudgements, because *no man repented him of his wickednesse, saying, What haue I done?* implying, that as pardon cannot bee expected without repentance, so repentance cannot be hoped for without examination & questioning with our soules. And therefore we neede not maruell that Gods Iudgements are continued vpon vs, seeing we neuer take care to passe Iudgement vpon our selues.

Ier. 8. 6.

3. We may hereby see, how it cometh to passe that many men haue grosse and conspicuous faults, which themselves discern not, though euery childe abroad can point at them and display them. For if Examination bee so good a meane to represent our sinnes, as in a glasse, vnto vs, then they which see not their open sinnes, are not accustomed to make vse of this meane. And therefore, as when wee see a man come abroad with some notable deformity about his face, wee may conclude that that man hath not lately looked himselfe in his glasse: so if we see a man blinde in iudging of his owne sinnes, which are to others

as conspicuous as the spots in a mans face, wee may build vpon it, that man doth not vse to looke himselfe in the glasse of his conscience, and by Examination to take a view what his deformities are.

4. We may hence gather matter of *encouragement*, to breake thorow all difficulties, and to shake off our wonted drowinesse, that wee may with alacritie and perseuerance goe thorow with this worke. For if Examination bee so necessarie for *repentance* and reformation: and so effectually to breede vs *comfort* in our greatest agonie, and to avert Gods *Iudgements* for our sinnes: then every wise man will conclude, that this is a worke as necessarie as his daily foode. For say that a man cared not for grace and amendment, (which were almost desperate and gracelesse resolution, yet say a man cared not for these:) is there any man liuing, that would not be glad of some comfort when he lyeth a dying, or would not labour to be freed from the plagues that God powreth vpon vnrepentant sinners? Let vs then but seriously minde these gracious effects of a strict accounting with our soules, and I hope we shall not proue so gracelesse, as to refuse our owne mercie, and wilfully to cast away those precious soules, which Christ hath purchased at so deare a rate. I beseech then every Christian, that either desireth heauen, or feareth hell, that if he haue bene negligent in this dutie heretofore, he now at length beginne a due and serious performance of it, and euen double his future care, that he may redeeme his former negligence: remembring withall, if still bee

that we should stand in all our doings, as
if we were to stand before the Lord, and
that we should be so careful of our doings,
that we should be able to give an account
of them every day, will rise up in judgement
against fleshly Christians, that passe on day
by day, without ever taking account of
their doings. Yet we may consider further,
that even our selves shall rise up
against our selves in the last judgement;
and by our care for our shares in the world,
condemne our carelessness for the state of
our soules. For if we know it to be so
needfull for our worldly estates, to keepe
an account of our expences and receipts,
what excuse can we haue for our selves,
that wee haue for many dayes and weekes,
without taking any account of our liues
and consciences? And thinke
euen, every such thought should pierce
the heart of any Christian: and therefore
haue I touched them, that we may be
at last inwardly touched with a feeling
of our owne want, and desire of God,
that he will open our eyes, that we may
see what is behoofull for vs.
And thus I haue ended our hearts,
that we may follow after it.

FINIS

